

# GENERAL ENGLER ON LOGISTICS

*Lieutenant General Jean E. Engler was Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Department of the Army from June 1967 to August 1969, the date of his retirement from active service. A veteran logistician with over 36 years of service, he has held numerous important command and staff positions. General Engler served as deputy commanding general of U. S. Army Materiel Command from August 1963 to April 1964. He was commanding general of U. S. Army Supply and Maintenance Command from April 1964 to December 1965. In January 1966, he was assigned as deputy commanding general of U. S. Army Vietnam and remained in that post until May 1967. On the eve of his retirement, General Engler discussed the accomplishments, developments, and problems of these years and the outline for the future in an interview with Mr. Thomas A. Johnson, Editor, ARMY LOGISTICIAN magazine.*

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**What attributes do you look for in an officer who is being considered for a logistics assignment?**

General Engler: A good management background, a good sense of judgment, and the ability to think logically and make common sense decisions. A technical education will give him an insight into the complexity of the materiel which we use and probably will be a very interesting aspect of his career, but in the final analysis, I don't think a technical background and knowledge determines advancement to the more senior positions. In the main, I believe that we should rely on our civilian logisticians for this deep technical education and background.

**Will this change as the computer comes of age? Will the logistics manager have to be more machine oriented and less experience oriented?**

General Engler: I don't think the logistician of the future will have to be any different from today's logistician or from those of the past. He should be capable of capitalizing on automatic data processing equipment to give him the visibility and information which he would not otherwise be able to obtain. There isn't any question that ADP equipment and faster communications facilities will be of great assistance in the decision-making process. But in the final analysis this



**Lieutenant General Jean E. Engler**

does not require a specialist in any of these fields—only an understanding of what they can do for him and how he can best utilize them. His decisions will continue to be based on his experience, management capabilities with emphasis on good judgment, and good, hard common sense. He must be flexible and be able to think and act in an extremely logical fashion. These are most important as far as the logistician is concerned.

**Then the ideal officer would possess a strong academic background in liberal arts and management?**

General Engler: Not necessarily liberal arts. An undergraduate degree in one of the sciences is extremely useful. A degree in business administration or law would serve him very well in developing management capability. A good technical background will enable him to work better with technicians. I don't know that it is absolutely mandatory for him to possess a good technical background but it probably is well worth having.

**How does a young Army officer get into logistics?**



**General Engler:** Several avenues are open to a young officer. Many enter via one of the technical services; others get into the field through one of the combat arms. Regardless of the route, he should pick the technical area that has the type of logistics responsibility that interests him and challenges him the most. Then he should apply himself.

How should he prepare himself for his new career?

**General Engler:** A young officer should get military and civilian schooling as early as possible in his career. Particularly, he should seek advanced schooling. A master's degree and, if possible, a doctorate is extremely important. He should welcome challenging assignments, accept each assignment with a view of making the most out of it, and giving it his best. This is more important than trying to search out and pick jobs on his own. I would caution the young officer not to channelize himself—by that I mean he should resist the temptation of repetitive assignments in the same logistics field. It would be much better if he broadens himself by assignments in the fields of supply, maintenance, procurement, production, and other logistics services. These varied assignments will prepare him to do a much better job when he reaches the senior grades than if he remains within a single functional area of logistics.

**"At the senior positions, logistics is 90% management."**

Then the long term prospects are brighter for the generalist in logistics than the specialist?

**General Engler:** Yes, the principal job of the logistician is management. The technical aspects of logistics are important but it is basically a management job. In senior positions it is 90% management.

Do the technical service branches hinder or assist the development of generalists? Specifically, do you think that 10 years from now we might have a supply or logistics corps that would enable officers to get a broader more functional assignment than within their own corps?

**General Engler:** Right now I can't see any good substitute for the technical service system. To a great extent, this parallels the pattern of the combat arms which branch trains an officer and at the same time recognizes that when he reaches a certain grade he must become a generalist within the combat arms. I think the same thing is applicable to the technical services. It might be possible to subdivide the technical services into subtechnical areas and to qualify people in those areas, but for the present I think the technical services represent the soundest approach.

For the past decade you have been in the real action spots of logistics. In retrospect, what would you consider to be the major developments and accom-

plishments during this period?

**General Engler:** So many accomplishments come to mind that it is difficult to select the most significant ones. As you know we switched from the technical service organization to a single materiel command organization in 1962. The Army Materiel Command was given all of the logistics responsibility for which the technical services previously held. The realignment ranks high on my list of accomplishments. You must realize that it hadn't been completed when the Vietnam war put the system to a severe test. It strained the new organization to its utmost but at the same time provided an excellent field test for it.

**"By the end of 1969, equipping the ARVN units will be substantially complete."**

The Vietnam logistics buildup must rate as one of our greatest accomplishments. It tested the ingenuity and capability of the people who held key supervisory positions in the Army Materiel Command particularly when they were working in an organization that was in the process of being put together and trained as an organization. The successful buildup in Vietnam was assisted in great measure by the fact that the commanding general of the Army Materiel Command was given total responsibility for the Army wholesale logistics system. Additionally, the creation of the 11th Air Assault Division and the subsequent deployment of the 1st Cavalry Division to Vietnam represent very significant accomplishments of the Army as a whole



as well as logistically. The acquisition of modern helicopters, the placing of those helicopters in Vietnam in quantity, and the maintaining of these helicopters in combat are major accomplishments. Particularly significant is the fact that helicopters do not operate from fixed bases; they are spread all over the country. Right now they are operating from more than 250



locations. They take to the field just as a maneuver battalion does—out where the troops need support. Providing logistic backup and support of these helicopters in the field away from fixed repair facilities and maintaining daily operational readiness rates equivalent to those of fixed wing aircraft speaks for itself. The helicopter gave us the ability to operate off of the roads and to move about the country rapidly to meet whatever situation that confronted us.

Didn't night devices make a substantial contribution to U. S. successes in Vietnam?

General Engler: It was recognized early in the Vietnam buildup that there would be requirements for types of equipment that were peculiar to the environment. The Viet Cong knew every trail and every road and their capability to operate at night far surpassed ours. Night vision devices were urgently needed if we were to deny the Viet Cong exclusive use of the night. An Expedited Non-Standard Urgent Requirements for Equipment (ENSURE) program was established to expedite the development of such items. These items received expedited development, procurement, shipment, and technical follow-up, all the way through the system.

What special management resources have been called on to assist in managing the logistics support of Southeast Asia?

General Engler: A series of special management practices have been implemented to improve control over the supplies in Vietnam. Project COUNTER teams were organized and trained and sent from CONUS to Vietnam to assist in locating, identifying, and inventorying supplies and equipment. We

initiated a retrograde program to remove backlogged supplies which were beyond the capability of in-country units to segregate and process. The automation of the Vietnam Inventory Control Center and supply depots has been of great value.

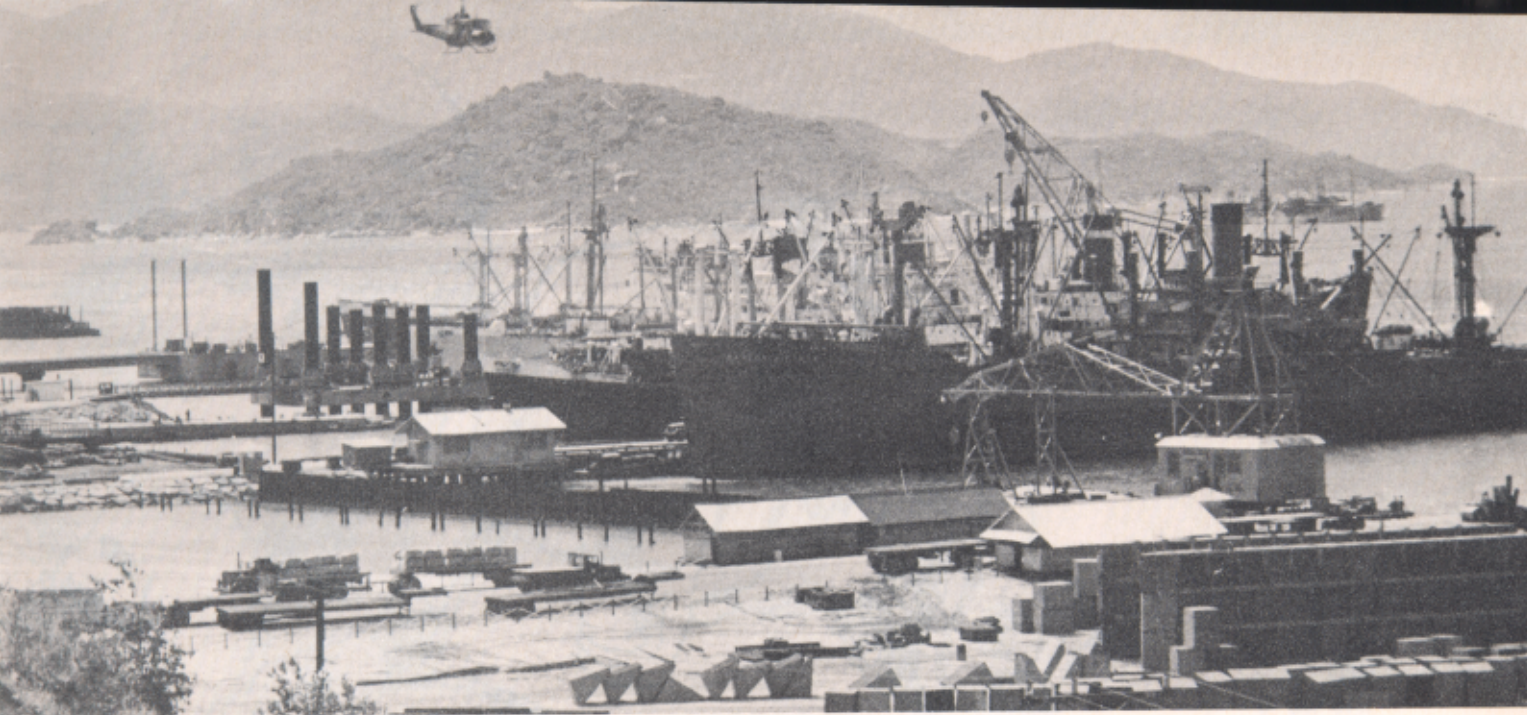
Among the most important projects were STOP, STOP/SEE, and STOP/SEE Expanded. Their aim was to challenge, cancel, and block requisitions for items already in long supply in Vietnam as well as frustrating and diverting shipments of these items before leaving CONUS for Vietnam. As a result of these projects, requisitions valued at \$284,500,000 have been cancelled and stocks valued at \$11,800,000 have been either frustrated at CONUS ports or diverted to CONUS supply depots.

**"Night devices were needed if we were to deny the exclusive use of the night to the Viet Cong."**

Interservice Project for Utilization and Redistribution of Materiel in the Pacific Area (PURM) has been a useful management tool. This project was established by the Secretary of Defense in November 1967 with the purpose of identifying excesses and imbalances in PACOM inventories which resulted from the speed and magnitude of the logistics buildup in Vietnam, and redistributing these excesses to satisfy requirements elsewhere in the DOD Supply System. Under this project over \$677,000,000 of excess materiel has been screened against military service requirements resulting in the redistribution to date of about \$150,000,000. The value of USARV stocks which have been screened amount to about \$176,000,000.







How are the logistics support and modernization of Vietnamese forces progressing?

General Engler: Of course the overall objective is to assist in organizing, training, and equipping the South Vietnamese so that they can take over the combat mission from our troops and hopefully permit us eventually to withdraw our forces. The major credit goes to the Military Assistance Command, Vietnam—initially to General Westmoreland and now General Abrams—and their staffs. They assisted in the creation of new Vietnamese forces and acted as advisors during their training. The logistics support required to place Vietnamese forces in the field has been provided in accordance with the MACV schedule. In other words we have been, and are, able to provide equipment in time phase with their ability to organize, train, and deploy units.

Is the program a success?

General Engler: It is very much an on-going success. We forecast that by the end of the calendar year

**"The Vietnam logistics buildup must rate as one of our greatest accomplishments."**

1969 the equipment shipments to ARVN combat units will be substantially complete. This is not to say that our job will be finished at that time. We must continue to replace items lost because of battle losses and normal attrition. Beyond that, the course of future support requirements is of necessity geared to a change in the level of conflict, and no one can clearly assess that at this time.

I know you are extremely interested in organizational structures as they pertain to management visi-

bility. Do you think there is a place for the project manager in a logistics system?

General Engler: Management by commodity groupings is the most logical and effective method for maintaining visibility and control, especially for the handling of the great bulk of routine logistics transactions. However, when it becomes necessary to cross commodity groupings for selective management of a critical weapon or equipment system because of its high priority or critical need then we have a place for a project manager. I think we have always had what amounts to project managers but it is a more formalized activity today. We must develop better techniques for project management and particularly a check and balance system to verify progress and identify problem areas.

General, in your opinion what will the next five years be like for the logistician? Is money going to be tighter? Are people going to be harder to get?

General Engler: I don't know about people being harder to get or money being tighter. As far as the present day is concerned, I would say that logistically we have kept a fairly balanced posture. Some say that we have by reason of the necessity of meeting the Vietnam requirements denied resources to other areas. This of course has occurred from time to time. We are forced to assign priorities to meet needs. If we need something worse in one particular place at one time it may be necessary to postpone delivery to some other place to meet this greater need. This is something we do in every day life. From an overall management standpoint, in my own estimation, the resources in the form of dollars provided to the Army to acquire the materiel necessary to support our worldwide commitments has been very well balanced. 